



Current Operations and Lessons Learned



In 2004, the Marine Corps continued leading our nation's fight in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Demonstrating the versatility of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to support the U.S. national security strategy, more than 70,000 Marines and their equipment redeployed to Iraq early

in the year. In March, an additional 35,000 Marines were deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Emphasizing the Corps' core capabilities of agility, flexibility and speed, 26,000 Marines with the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) deployed to Iraq within a one-month period to continue stabilization and security operations (SASO) as part of the GWOT.

Current Operations



The spring deployment included Marines from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), or MEU (SOC), 24th MEU and 31st MEU (SOC) who served in Iraq, and Marines from 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, HMLA-773(-), and the 22nd MEU (SOC) who served in Afghanistan. When their seven-month deployment ended in September, 20,000-plus Marines were deployed to replace them. The fall deployment included Marines from 3d Battalion, 6th Marines and various Marine Corps aviation units.

In 2004, Marines were not only crucial to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in all four corners of the world. From the Horn of Africa to Haiti and the Philippines, Marines displayed the litness and responsiveness of the MAGTF. Across the globe, Marines assumed diverse missions, which included maintaining a forward presence and security-cooperation deterrence in the Western Pacific and Southern Atlantic, conducting non-combatant evacuation and humanitarian assistance operations in Western Africa,

and providing natural disaster assistance and special-event security at home.

Throughout the year, numerous Fleet Anti-Terrorist/Force-Protection units, operating at home and abroad, demonstrated the versatility and dependability of Marine forces. Marines also supported civil authorities in myriad Homeland Security operations, such as providing security for the President's State of the Union Address and G8 Summit.

The adaptability and reliability of Marine forces were also highlighted in the II MEF deployment to Haiti, as MAGTF-8 conducted operations to stabilize the nation, provide security, support the provision of international humanitarian aid, and enable the transition to United Nations multinational efforts. MAGTF-8 was under orders to be prepared to conduct non-combatant evacuation operations to protect and evacuate U.S. citizens, designated host-nation citizens, and third-country nationals from Haiti.





In 2004, the Marine Corps was called upon, as in previous years, to participate in a wide range of operations in support of Homeland Security across the nation. Marines from both coasts fought and contained wildfires, including one adjacent to Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, CA. Marines also supported hurricane relief efforts in Florida and other East Coast regions devastated by three back-to-back storms.

As 2004 drew to a close, the flexibility of the MAGTF was once again brought to bear



on one of the greatest natural disasters of the past 100 years. On December 26, a tsunami struck numerous nations in the Indian Ocean region. The devastation of 150,000-plus dead and widespread infrastructure damage led to the U.S. formation of Joint Task Force (JTF) 536 to assist in disaster relief operations. The CG of III MEF was tasked with forming the JTF, and Disaster Relief Assessment Teams from III MEF were immediately on station in Thailand, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. To further assist in this effort, more assets were forward deployed from Okinawa to the affected areas, and Expeditionary Strike Group 5, made up of the 15th MEU(SOC), was deployed off the coast of Indonesia and Sri Lanka to further assist in relief operations. By year's end, MPSRON Squadron 3 from Guam was underway to the affected area, and Marines and members of the other armed forces were beginning this massive relief effort.

Exercises

While the Marine Corps was participating in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, most training exercises



were cancelled, and participation in service exercises throughout the world was reduced. However, Marines from 3d Battalion, 25th Marines embarked aboard the USS *Tortuga* to participate in Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, UNITAS Exercise, engaging in a series of bilateral training exercises with regional partners in South America.

At home, the Marine Corps resumed limited service exercises, as forces redeployed to the continental United States. During this time, extensive stabilization and security operations (SASO) training was conducted for units deploying to the CENTCOM region. MEU (SOC) work-ups began to prepare the recently redeployed forces for scheduled and emergent deployments, and to evaluate individual and unit proficiency to maintain the operational dominance of the MAGTF across the spectrum of operations.

Counter-Drug Operations

Throughout 2004, the Marine Corps continued to contribute to the nation's counter-drug effort, participating in

numerous missions in support of Joint Task Force-Six (JTF-6), Joint Interagency Task Force-East (JIATF-E), and Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W). These missions were conducted on federal lands along the Southwest border of the United States and in several domestic "hot spots" that have been designated as high-intensity, drug-trafficking areas. Individual Marines and units are assigned to these missions to provide support to domestic drug-law enforcement throughout the country. Marine Forces Reserve executed the vast majority of these missions.



Lessons Learned From Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF-II)

Continuing operations throughout Iraq have been characterized by a sea change in our missions and responsibilities, as compared to our initial incursion into the theater of operations for Operation Iraqi Freedom I (OIF-I). Although the major combat operations phase of the campaign to liberate Iraq has ended, Marines have been continuously engaged in stability and support operations requiring unrelenting engagement with insurgent terrorist factions. As we conduct our “three block war,” we are continually learning, and reconfirming, lessons relevant to stability and support operations.

It has become imperative that we shorten the time between problem identification

and solution, as we prosecute the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Many of the problems identified during OIF-I have been addressed and have either already been solved or are being remedied. The Marine Corps fielded many new weapon systems and items of equipment before and during the deployment of the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) for Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF-II). Some were in response to requests from the deploying forces, and others were advance-fielded by the Marine Corps Systems Command. A partial list includes:

Armor and armor kits for more than 3,000 I MEF tactical vehicles, the need for which came from many reports about the lifesaving/injury-mitigation of vehicle hardening, such as incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), wherein Marines proclaimed, “The metal saved my life!”;

Auxiliary body armor, which when fitted to the outer tactical vest (OTV), provides additional side and shoulder protection;

Advanced Combat Optic Gunsights (ACOG) and Rifle Combat Optics, that increase lethality of our riflemen, while reducing potential for collateral damage;





Position Location Information (PLI) equipment;

Counter-IED detection equipment;

Combat Identification (CID) equipment to prevent or mitigate fratricide;

Dust abatement equipment that assists in allowing aircraft (primarily rotary-wing) to safely land in dusty environments and expeditionary airfields;

Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) center seats that allow Marines to face outboard, rather than inboard, when transported by truck;

Vehicle barrier nets to assist Marines at checkpoints by providing a non-lethal capability to stop vehicle threats; and,

Explosive ordnance detection capabilities, such as explosive protection suits for engineers, mine detection equipment, x-ray machines, and robotics.

Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

The Commandant has established the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) at the Marine Corps Combat

Development Command (MCCDC) under the auspices of the Expeditionary Force Development Center. The mission of the MCCLL is to collect, assess, manage, and disseminate knowledge that is gained through operational experience, exercises, and supporting activities to enable Marines to achieve higher levels of effectiveness, efficiency, and proficiency, and to provide information, analysis, and assessment of lessons learned—in support of Marine operating forces, as well as the Commandant in executing Title 10 USC responsibilities. To accomplish active data collection during an operation or major exercise, Marines shall be formed into MCCLL Detachments that can rapidly deploy to support commanders of Marine operating forces with capabilities to quickly identify, analyze, and assess lessons emerging from the operation.

Stability and Support Operations

Stability and support operations are being conducted with political goals as the No. 1 priority. Units conducting stability and support operations are part of a larger operation, which has political implications





that may limit standard combat missions. Each participating organization must learn to accommodate the culture, values, and methods of operations of the other participants. The Marine Corps' job in stability and support operations is to ensure that existing conflict does not escalate and spread. Collateral damage, the injury or death of noncombatants, and the destruction of property caused by military operations erode the sense of legitimacy of these operations.

Flexibility

Thus, flexibility is crucial in the Corps' wide range of capabilities to address changing threats. The first step is to break the cycle of impunity for those who commit criminal acts of violence. Stable democracies everywhere, including budding democracies in post-conflict states, must be rooted in the rule of law. Post-conflict states must provide their populations with security, stability, safety, and the assurance that transparent law enforcement and judicial processes provide the same protections and penalties for all citizens. They invariably need help in accomplishing this.

Force Flow

For OIF-I, Marine forces arrived in the theater on or before deadline, resulting in the Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) being moved ahead five to 10 days.

One of the factors impacting the effectiveness of strategic force deployment was the tendency for commanders to request specific units, or types of units, instead of requesting a desired capability. Flexibility for the force planner can best be achieved by identifying the desired capability, which allows the planner to select the appropriate



unit based on availability, training, and readiness status, as well as other factors not visible to the theater forces.

One difficulty for theater forces was the rapidly changing combat environment, which forced a change and reprioritization of requirements. Another difficulty was the sometimes-tedious process of validating, revalidating, and challenging the validity of identified requirements, as the requests made their way up the chain of command. There were cases where the underlying rationale was not obvious, or the assumptions unknown, which led to a series of queries and responses between levels within the process. Additionally, there were resource constraints that resulted in shortfalls in desired capabilities, compromises, or alternative solutions. The Request for Forces (RFF) process had a significant impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of strategic deployment of forces. The process, as currently established, will not support the rapid, flexible deployment of a large joint force in a crisis situation. Because the process allows for the selective disapproval of specific units within the force, without providing the decision-maker the implications of the delayed arrival or elimination of that unit from the deploying force, there is considerable risk of failure due to the “law of unintended consequences.”

The Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) incremental validation process is on a 24-hour cycle, which permits more responsive adjustments to changing requirements. The RFFs were typically reviewed on a weekly basis which, on several occasions, increased the timeline for approval of forces. While critical requirements could be submitted for review



off-cycle, many changes in requirements fell below the criteria to be considered “critical,” yet, nonetheless, required timely approval to allow the deployment process to continue at pace. The ad hoc manual tracking and management tools, which had to be developed to monitor the status of RFFs, were limited in their efficiency and created a labor-intensive process that was added to existing deployment planning management systems and processes.

Training and Preparation/ Training Transformation (T2)

To accomplish stability and support operations, Marines need training in various skills and techniques before deployment to change their focus from “combat warriors” to “strategic Marines,” who will use force only in self-defense. Units normally require four to six weeks of specialized training. With prior planning, a training program can be developed that will assist commanders to prepare for these missions. Training and preparation for peacetime operations should not detract from a unit’s primary mission of training to fight and win in combat. The first requirement for

success in peacetime operations is the successful application of warfighting skills learned through normal military training.

Peacetime operations are not new and need not be treated as a separate task. Some of the key skills required (and where lacking, may be identified as shortfalls) are: intelligence, increased communications, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), military police, information operations, civil affairs, and linguists or reach-back translators. Accomplishing peacetime missions requires a thorough analysis of the active-Reserve force mix, as well as the allocation of high-demand/low-density troops and equipment.

Battlefield Contractors

Over time, there has been a shift from employing forces composed primarily of active component units that operate independently to increased dependence on a mix of active and Reserve components, civilian contractors, and multinational forces in joint and combined operations. Civilian contractors are now performing combat service support missions in a variety of contingency environments, which historically have been the responsibility of

uniformed military forces. Since Operation Desert Storm, more and more contractors have supported deployed forces. The determining factor for using battlefield contractors must be the suitability and cost effectiveness of contractors for various functions. Other issues include security and vulnerability, rules of engagement, and standard operating procedures for coordination of contractor services in combat operations.

Equipment Condition and Impact of Operational Tempo on Equipment Service Life

Overall equipment for OIF-II remains in good condition, including OIF-I back-loaded Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) equipment that did not go through a full maintenance cycle. High utilization rates will require equipment refurbishment and/or earlier replacement than originally programmed.

Continued Reliance on Reserves

Integration of Reserve component forces continues to be essential to the success of the Marine Corps' total force. As with OIF-I, the investment made to achieve



increased readiness in the Reserves has been validated. Some of the issues that have emerged include: the criticality of integrated training between the Reserve and active components; the need to address the gap between table of equipment (T/E) and training allowance (T/A); the suitability of personnel based on the adequacy of their skills and experience; and, the long-term impacts on retention of current Reservists, as well as active-duty Marines who will separate and become potential members of the Reserve force.

Force Dispersion

Force dispersion magnifies Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (C4) gaps. As observed in OIF-I, current operations suggest the need for increased networking, de-centralization, and standard business rules for information management to avoid overload of decision-makers and staff.



Measures of Effectiveness

Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) need to be operationalized. Many are currently tailored for headquarters use and are not focused on tactical units. Some of the supporting MOEs currently being monitored include:

Supply-volume flow—which supplies are sent out and which are not received;

Equipment readiness drive—which may affect training; and,

Personnel assignment process—which assignments fill Marine units vs. those that fill joint or liaison billets, or augment coalition positions.

Joint Processes

The successes enjoyed during OIF-II can be attributed to the prior working relationships established during OIF-I, as well as the experience gained from the operation. Many standard, deliberate, joint processes continue to lag behind the operational tempo generated by engaged forces. Many are synchronized to sequential, procedural planning and not to the rhythm of a dynamic battlefield. Some of the delays that are linked to standards, organizations, and procedures, such as battle damage assessment (BDA), continue to be addressed and are constantly improving.

Close Air Support (CAS) and Forward Air Controllers (FAC)

There are two very important and distinguishing characteristics of the Marine Corps Air-Ground team. No. 1: All Marines are Marines first. Being a pilot, infantry officer, or FAC is of secondary importance. Because we all “crawl out of the same fighting hole,” every Marine aviator knows first-



hand the challenges facing the ground-combat Marine. No. 2: There is no question about who is being supported within the Marine Corps. Although the Air Combat Element (ACE) can be employed as a maneuver element, it primarily supports the Ground Combat Element (GCE). ACE officers and Forward Air Controllers are not simply attached before an operation or exercise; rather, they are an organic part of the GCE and the planning process. It is not uncommon to have ACE commanders and planners meet and conduct concurrent planning with GCE counterparts.

The presence of Rotary Wing (RW) Forward Air Controllers (Airborne), or FAC(A)s, significantly increases ground FAC situational awareness. RW FAC(A)s are also highly effective in coordinating fixed wing (FW) CAS, allowing the ground FAC to concentrate on integrating aviation maneuver elements with the ground scheme of maneuver. The use of forward operating bases (FOB) and forward arming and refueling points (FARP) have significantly reduced response times, and extended the operational reach of platforms providing CAS.



In a closely linked role, RW escort of convoys has provided near-instantaneous close air support and significantly increased convoy survivability. RW CAS aircraft remain susceptible to rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) that are fired at short range and man-portable surface-to-air missiles (MANPAD) that are commonly employed during military operations in urban terrain (MOUT).

Fixed Wing (FW) CAS is the method of choice in the MOUT environment due to increased survivability and the ability to employ precision-guided munitions

(PGM), such as laser-guided bombs (LGB) to destroy buildings. Target designation is a critical factor, and FW FAC(A) proved to be an invaluable, survivable resource as a set of additional “eyes” over the target and engagement area.

Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP)

The requirement to conduct continuous operations underscored the need for additional air officers (AO) at the battalion, regiment, and division levels. Every company needs a FAC for the same reason. There has also been a need for TACP to support

convoys. These requirements indicate a heavy demand for FACs and AOs—an issue that is currently being addressed. TACP equipment needs include target location and designation systems, as well as night optics. Ground commanders and FACs have identified a need for increased Type II CAS training and the ability to incorporate new tactics, training, and procedures (TTP) into doctrinal publications.

Coalition Interoperability

Coalition interoperability continues to improve. The relationships and cooperation that have been realized still must be tempered with various operational realities. For example, mission approval authority and Rules of Engagement (ROE) vary by country; U.S. joint processes are complex even for U.S. forces, much less our coalition partners; and, equipment compatibility, connectivity, and capability differences exist across the spectrum among coalition partners. These operational concerns also suggest the possible need for provisional U.S. equipment for willing partners, and plans to allot space on pre-positioning ships and sea-based platforms to provide similar equipment to our partners.





There is a need for improved multinational training for U.S. and coalition forces. Obviously, we need increased dialogue with potential coalition partners on emerging concepts, evolving processes, and TTPs, as we strengthen habitual relationships and mutual understanding. Much of the latter can be accomplished via formal professional military education (PME) and informal or ad hoc arrangements. There also is a recognized need for robust combined training and staff/liaison officer exchanges, plus cooperative range and facility use to increase exposure to different locations and environments. Multinational forces bring unique operational experiences and capabilities to the fight, and we need to exploit these critical capabilities, such as SASO; nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) warfare; mine clearing; force protection; and, others. It is extremely important to cross-train immediately prior to employment, if coalition operations at the tactical level are to be successful.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

OIF-II has become a “TTP war” with Marines continually working to get inside the enemy’s decision cycle and to adapt to changing enemy tactics. To meet this need, the 1st Marine Division established a website for rapid TTP dissemination and exchange of ideas, on subjects such as “what works” and “new approaches to defeating the enemy.” This arrangement has provided a rapid response to operational requirements and has provided input to the Marine Corps System Command (MARCORSSYSCOM) forward liaison officer and the Expeditionary Force Development Center (EFDC) for continuous dialog/feedback with I MEF and the major subordinate commands (MSC). This has also resulted in a more responsive generation of Universal Needs Statements (UNS) and Urgent UNS.



Connectivity, C2, and Information Management

Force dispersion in OIF-II has magnified the C4 gaps identified in OIF-I. Issues that have already been identified and are being examined include: the need for more short-range and beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS) communications for both HHQ and small unit operations, in some cases down to squad/individual levels; additional tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (TUAV) for long-dwell, large-area coverage; increased networking, de-centralization, and standard business rules for information management; and, personnel, equipment, and supply in-transit visibility.

With the extreme speed of global information distribution, e-mails can very rapidly reach a global audience as they are passed on from one Internet user to another. A careless comment in an e-mail from the frontlines, intended as a private commentary on a potentially sensitive

subject, can rapidly become known to a global audience. More troubling is the potential for these communications to be modified en route or even be completely fabricated as a message created from our forward deployed forces. The potential for “urban legends” that need to be debunked creates an additional burden on those responsible for ensuring a coherent strategic communications message.

Command Challenges in Campaign Planning and Execution

At all levels, from the strategic to the tactical, real challenges exist that commanders must consider as we conduct operations in multi-national coalitions. Prime among these is the building of coalitions—integrating different levels of partnership. Any uncertainty that exists in the planning stage results in reduced reliance on coalition volunteers. Because mission approval authority varies by nation, command relationships and ROE must be thoroughly understood by all parties.

There is a need for niche capabilities to fill gaps in areas such as NBC, mine clearing, MOUT, and force protection. Information sharing and interoperability must be addressed, particularly with regards to access of classified networks and planning tools.

Impact of Transformation on Future Coalition Operations

As U.S. forces continue to transform to meet future threats in the GWOT, our rapid deployment capability may drive the United States to more independent operations in the initial stages of campaigns to leverage our speed. Transformation may



be cost-prohibitive for some potential coalition partners and further aggravates equipment interoperability and compatibility issues.

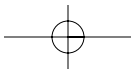
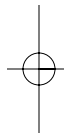
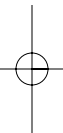
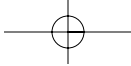
This suggests the need for the United States to have provisional equipment for willing partners and to improve interagency coordination and liaison. There may still be a need to segregate State Department and/or CIA intelligence and information from some partners during political negotiations. Yet, we must increase dialogue with potential coalition partners on emerging Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare (EMW) concepts, while maintaining or increasing joint/combined training and exchange of staff/liaison officers. We will need to build habitual relationships, mutual understanding, familiarity with evolving processes, and TTPs—to name just a few examples.

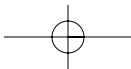
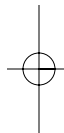
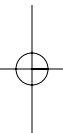
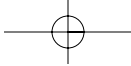
Epilogue

We have learned a lot about our organization, processes, systems, and equipment. But probably the most salient lesson that we have taken away is the absolutely essential need to continue building into our Marines the ethos, character, and skills that



enable them to take our imperfect systems and processes—sometimes using very old equipment, under conditions of uncertainty and peril, against a determined and deadly enemy—and convert those ingredients into victory. □



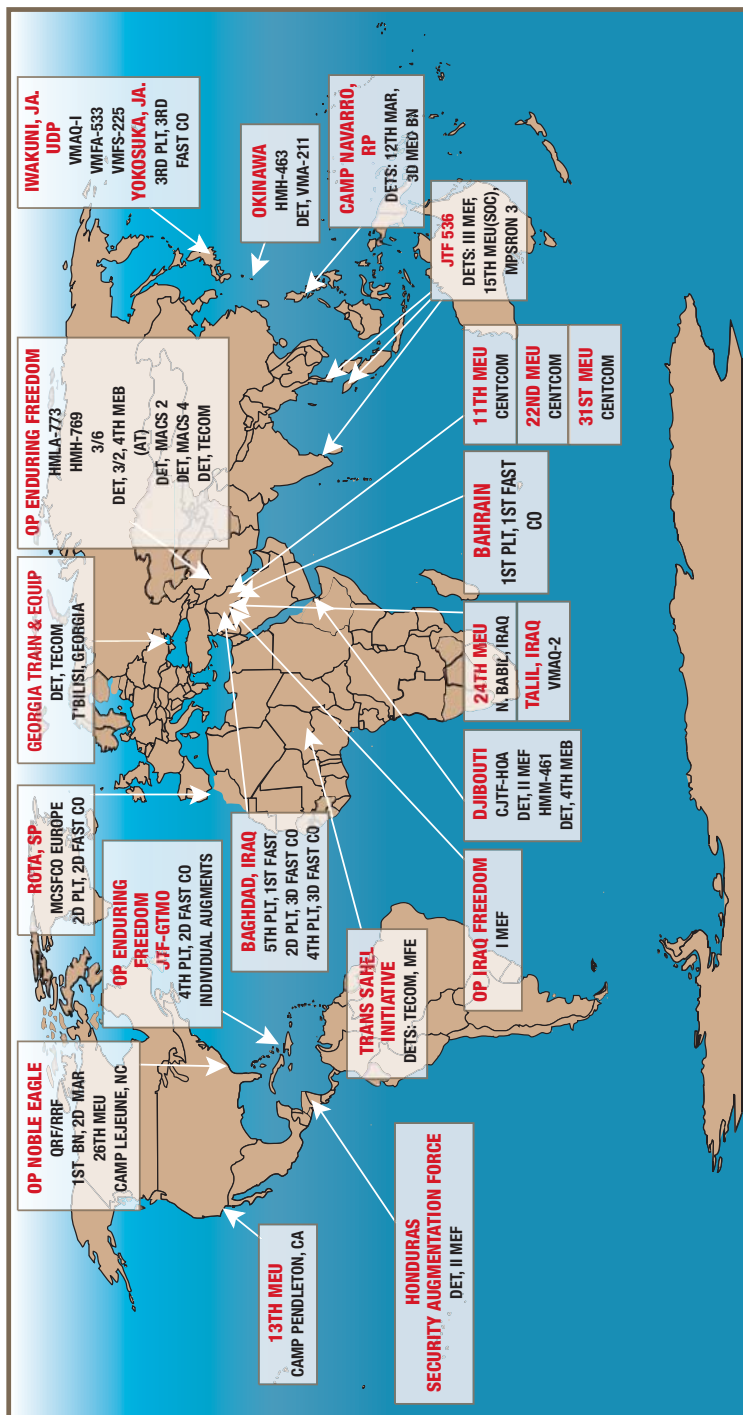


USMC Operations Matrix

DATE	LOCATION	MISSION
Oct 92 - Present	SE Asia	POW/MIA Accounting
Nov 00 - Present	Kosovo	Staff Augments
Sep 01 - Present	CONUS/ Guam/ Diego Garcia	Air Defense, Contingency Response
Dec 01 - Present	Kabul, Afghanistan	Embassy Security
Dec 01 - Present	Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	Security, Staff Augments
Jan 02 - Present	CENTCOM AOR Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgistan	Combat Operations
Jan 02 - Present	PACOM AOR Phillipines	Security and Medical Augmentation
Nov 02 - Present	CENTCOM AOR Horn of Africa	Anti-Terrorist Operations and Theater Security Cooperation
Nov 02 - Present	EUCOM AOR Republic of Georgia	Georgian Security Assistance Program (GSAP)
Jan 03 - Present	CENTCOM AOR Iraq	Combat Operations
Oct 03 - Present	EUCOM AOR (PTDO)	NATO Operational Reserve Force
	EUCOM AOR Med Sea/Greece	EMIO/VBSS
	EUCOM AOR Niamey, Niger	Humanitarian Operations/Security Assistance Training

FORCE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION
Dets from III MEF	Recovery operations in support of Operation FULL ACCOUNTING
Individual Augments	Operation JOINT GUARDIAN
Elements of 2D and 3D MARDIVs, 1ST MAW, CBIRF	Provide air defense, quick/ready reaction, and incident response forces in support of CINCNORAD, CINCPAC, and Operation NOBLE EAGLE
Det, 3D BN, 2D MAR, 4TH MEB (AT)	Provide security at the U.S. Embassy Compound
Det, 4TH MEB (AT)/FAST PLT, and Individual Augments	Provide security and staff augmentation in support of JTF-GTMO and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM
3D BN, 6TH MAR; Elements of 4TH MAW and TECOM	Conduct combat operations in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; provide training and instruction to the ANA
Elements of 3D MARDIV and 3D FSSG	Provide security and medical support of U.S. forces deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM - Phillipines
Det, 2D MARDIV, Det, 4TH MEB (AT), Det, HMH-461	Conduct anti-terrorist operations and theater security cooperation within the Horn of Africa in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM
Dets, II MEF, TECOM	Provide training in company level tactics and the Marine Corps Planning Process to elements of the Georgian Armed Forces
I MEF, 1ST FAST CO (-), Det B, 4TH ANGLICO, and Individual Augments to MNF-I, MNC-I, OSC	Conduct SASO ISO of the IIG; provide security in support of the U.S. mission in Baghdad; provide combined arms coordination for the multi-national division - South East Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
INF BN, 2D MARDIV	Provide ready reaction forces in support of CDRUSEUCOM, and U.S. forces deployed to the Balkans
2D PLT/2D FAST CO	Provide expanded maritime interdiction operations, and visit/board search and seizure capability ISO in support of Operation PURPLE FLEX (Olympics)
Det, MARFOREUR	Provide company level training in security operations and humanitarian assistance including medical support; TRANS-SAHEL initiative

Selected Marine Corps Deployments 2004



Early 2005 Marine Corps Deployment

